# Before Your Visit: Lesson #3

# **Historical Document Research**

(Expected Class Sessions to Complete: 1 to 2)

## Objectives:

Students will be able to tell the difference between a primary and a secondary resource. Students will understand why historical document research is important to historical archeology and what sort of information can and cannot be learned by looking at documents.

#### Materials:

- 1794 map of Philadelphia
- Current map of Philadelphia
- Copies of Dexter primary source documents with transcriptions (copy document on front with transcription on back)
  - o Elizabeth Drinker diary excerpts
  - 1782 petition to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council
  - Undated petition signed by James Dexter
  - A Sunday Morning view of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia
  - o The 1794 Philadelphia Directory and Register
  - o Dexter Manumission Papers
  - Isaac Zane and James Pemberton accounts of Dexter
  - Priss Manumission Papers

## **Standards Correlation:**

Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

\*\*Note: Standards listed are extrapolated from Grade6 CC History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects; the lessons can be adapted for grades 5-12, refer to corresponding standards for your particular grade level.

CCRI (6-8).1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCRI (6-8).2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments

CCRI (6.8).6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCRI (6-8).9 Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

CCRH (6-8).1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCRH (6-8) .2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCRH (6-8).6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCRH (6-8).9 Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

### **Introduction:**

Have students locate the site of James Dexter's home on a 1794 map of Philadelphia. Discuss the following questions. What was the area like? What can we learn looking at the 1794 map of Philadelphia? Where did most people live? Where were businesses located? Why? Then have the students find the site of Dexter's home on a current map of Philadelphia. What is the area like now? Compare and contrast. This activity can be done in small groups or as a class.

#### Procedure:

Ask the class, how do historians, archeologists, and others learn about the past? Have the students list some primary source documents and some secondary source documents that could be used to learn about the past. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using different sources.

Divide the students into groups of three or four. Hand out the primary source documents related to James Dexter with their transcriptions.

For **grades 5-7** give each group of students one document (a different document for each group). Ask them to read the document and find out as much as they can about James Dexter. They will share this information with the class as well as what kind of document it came from. Then, with the class as a whole, combine the information from all the

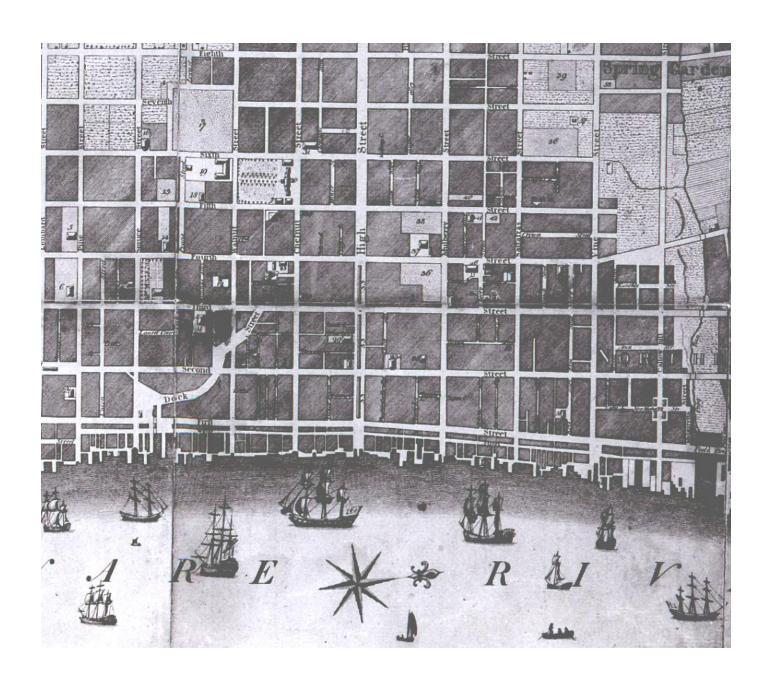
documents to write a biography of Dexter. Be sure to cite the sources where the information was found. As a class, decide what other information people may want to know about Dexter. How might that information be found? Could archeology help?

For **grades 8-9** give each group of students two or three documents (different documents for each group, some may be repeated). Ask them to read their documents and find out as much as they can about James Dexter. Ask them to write a biography for Dexter based on the information they found in their primary source documents. Be sure to cite the sources where the information was found. Then, the students will share this information with the class. They can then discuss the different biographies and see how more research helps to fill out the picture of who Dexter was. Then with the class as a whole, combine the information from all the documents to write a class biography of Dexter. Ask the students what other information people may want to know about Dexter. How might that information be found? Could archeology help?

For **grades 10-12** give each group of students all of the documents. Have each group write a biography on James Dexter using their primary source documents. Be sure to have them cite their sources. Then have each group share their biographies. Discuss the similarities and differences between each biography. What assumptions did the students draw? Discuss the biographies as secondary source documents. Ask the students what other information people may want to know about Dexter. How might that information be found? Could archeology help?

## Closing:

Have a whole class discussion on what an archeologist can learn from primary source documents and why they want to research before starting an excavation.



1794 Map of Philadelphia (Detail) Courtesy of Independence National Historical Park

## **James Oronoco Dexter (Example Biography and Resource Information)**

James Oronoco Dexter lived at 5<sup>th</sup> Street between Arch and Race Streets. Oronoco lived there with 6 other people. The house was 2 stories high, built of brick, and was very plain. The house was new when Oronoco moved into it in 1790. He lived there until 1798. The house no longer stands. It was torn down by 1857.

Early in his life Oronoco had been held in slavery by Henry Dexter. Henry Dexter gave Oronoco to his son James. In 1767, Oronoco bought his freedom. He also bought the freedom of a young woman named Priss in the same year. Oronoco and Priss were married soon after.

Oronoco was a member of a new church just established by Absalom Jones. He hosted a meeting with the elders and deacons at his house. And he served on a committee to plan the building of the church.

Oronoco made his living as a coachman. He worked for a Quaker named John Pemberton. Oronoco drove the Pembertons and their friends in their horse drawn coach.

Look at the documents for more clues about James Oronoco Dexter's life.

Elizabeth Drinker was a close friend of the Pemberton family. She kept a diary. Oronoco Dexter is mentioned in it. She often refers to him by a nickname, Noke.

(Transcription of a selection of diary entries)

# **July 13, 1789**

"Noke came for me, took a short ride with HP (Hannah Pemberton)...

# **November 6, 1793** (during Yellow Fever Epidemic)

Pemberton's Noke came this morning from the City, he says that the day before yesterday, there was no burial in Friends ground, Yesterday three, one of them was the wife of Samuel Garrigas, and that, this day there was no grave open'd there.

# March 1, 1796

Oronoko came this morning to know if I would ride with his Mistress, I agreed—he came for me about 11 o'clock, we rode about the city till one, when he drove me home to dinner.

# August 10, 1799

John Drinker called here—Oronoko is dead, our Jacob went to his funeral, many a pleasant ride have I taken with his Mistress under his care and protection, poor Noke."

Theladelphia Chrill 2 1789 This . Exalency yovernor Moore The Humble Solition of She Dlack recette liberty of your Honours and our frostection to frence in the Lotters nelim gran 1782 petition to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania D. 11 (1) Supreme Executive Council Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Archives

Philadelphia April 7, 1782

To his Exalency Governor Moore & his Honourable Counselers

The Humble Petition of the Black people of the City and Suburbs Humbly craveth liberty of your Honours and your protection to fence in the Negroes Burying ground in Potters field your petitioners will pray.

> John Black Samuel Saville Oronoco Dexter Cuff Duglass Aram Prymus William Gray

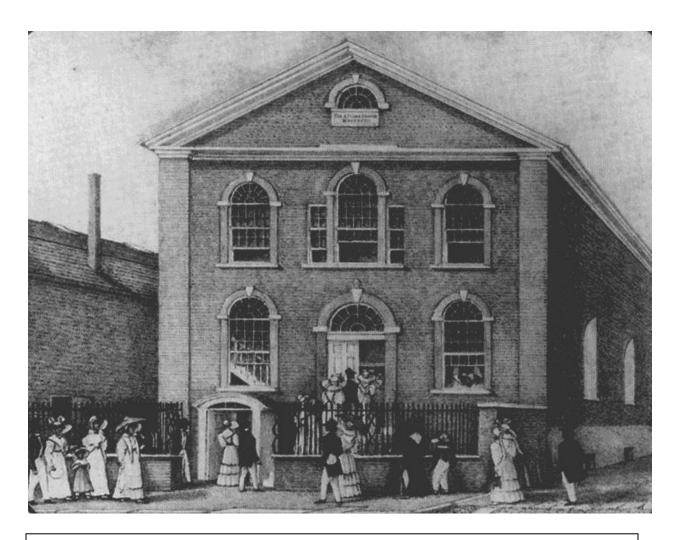
We humbly Potition you that you will bepleased to inquier into the go ces of which we have complained and - and are concerne the wellfair of that forward and Caparate infudgment with your Frederickers, that we have with othermen an Unalinoulble hight to life Liberty & the hersent happeness, so that nothing may be wanting on your part to finititate so descerable an object, opening a door for a gradual Emansipation take place, and likewise to took forward preparing a way an may haveil in our forer to be come more Unefull to the Community of Large who are now at a loss for a levelyhood for amfelves & camleys

Undated Petition signed by James Dexter, Cox-Parish –Wharton Papers, Collection #154 Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

# Transcript of draft petition from about 1791.

We humbly Petition you that you will be pleased to inquire into the governances of which we have complained and—and we conceive the wellfair of nations depends in the Equally distributing of Justice, that you may look forward and \_\_\_\_\_(Corporate?) in Judgement with your Predecessors the first Congress that we have with other men have an Unalinauble Right to life Liberty & pursuit of happiness, so that nothing may be wanting on your part to facilitate so discernable an object of opening a door for a gradual Emancipation to take place, and likewise look forward preparing a way an asylum for such as may meline who are free, to resort, similar to the one prepared by the British in Serealluone (Sierra Leone?) so that such of us that are favoured with Liberty may have it in our power to become more useful to the Community at Large who are now at a loss for a livelihood for ourselves & famleys.

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas was built in 1794. Church records show that Oronoco Dexter hosted a meeting of the Elders and Deacons at his house on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in 1792. He also served on the committee that planned the building of the church.



A Sunday Morning View of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia By William L Brenton (1829) Courtesy of the Episcopal Church of the United States

## 39

# The 1794 Philadelphia Directory and Register shows James Dexter's address and occupation.

THE

## PHILADELPHIA

# DIRECTORY

AND

## REGISTER:

#### CONTAINING

THE NAMES, OCCUPATIONS, AND PLACES OF ASODE OF THE CITIZENS; ARRANGED IN ALPHABET-ICAL ORDER:

#### A REGISTER

OF THE EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, AND JUDICIAL MAGISTRATES OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATES OF PENNSYLVANIA, WITH THEIR SALAMES! THE GOVERNORS OF THE DIFFERNT STATES, AND THE MAGISTRATES OF THE CILY!

#### TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE CITY; AND OF THE CMA-RITABLE AND LIFEBARY INSTITUTIONS THEREIN.

# THE SECOND EDITION.

BY JAMES HARDIE, A. M.

#### PHILADELPHIA:

Printed for the duther, by Jacon Johnson & Co. Mo. 147, Market-Street.

M Dec Nelv.

[Price 62 2-2 Cents-]

#### PHILADELPHIA DIRECTORY.

Devee Lewis, blacksmith, Prime St. Southwark. Deveny William, boarding house, 339, High St. Deveze John, M. D. 161, Mulherry St. Deveze Lewis, nailor, 252, Swanion St. Dewees Benjamin, cordwainer, 16, Saffafras St. De Wees William, physician, 85, Elm St. Dexter james, coachman, 84, No. Fifth St. Dexter Habella, widow, 20, Coemb's Alley. Dexter Richard, cordwainer, 6, Chancery Lane. Diamond Eonrad, huckster, 342, No. Second St. Diamond Daniel, labourer, 92, Shippen St. Dick Daniel, shopkeeper, 17, So. Front St. Dick Frederic, taylor, 24, So. Water St. Dick John, fhip carpenter, Mary St. Southwark. Dick Margaret, widow, fhopkeeper, 232, So. Second Dick Peter, chocolate manufacturer, 69, So. Front St. Dick Peter, grocer, 203, So. Third St. Dick Philip, taylor, 26, So. Water St. Dick Philip, grocer, 132, No, Third St. Dickerfon Daniel, lumber merchant & millwright, 70, No. Fourth St. Dickerson John, millwright, 411, No. Front St. Dickers Ann, widow, back 396, No. Front St. Dickins John, minister of the methodist church, 118, No. Fouth St. his book-store, 44, No. Second St. Dickinson Daniel, glover & breechesmaker, 32, So. Second St. Dickinfon Jonathan, jeweller, 73, High St. Dickinfon Mary, widow, 40, So. Fourth St. Dickinfon Morris, bookbinder, 38, So. Fourth St. Dickinfon Philemon, gentleman, Chefnut between Sixth and Seventh Sts. Dickinson Thomas cordwainer, So, So, Front St. Dickinfon William, labourer, 9, Elmilie's Alley. Dickinfon William, house carpenter, 112, Spruce St. Dickinfon \_\_\_\_\_, widow, 18, Pruin St. Dickfon John, mariner, 246, So. Front St. Dickfon Patrick, labourer, 1, Stamper's Alley. Dicky Mary, widow, 6, Crab St Southwark. Diehl Nicholas jun. attorney at law, 10, So. Fourth St. Diel Christopher, baker, Cherry between Seventh & Eighth Sts. Dietz Frederic, tavernkeeper, 408, So. Second St. Diget Henry, painter and glazier, Flibert between Lighth & Nioth Sts. Dill Adam, baker, 121, Pine St. Dillon Benjamin, rigger, Cherry between Fifth and

The Philadelphia Directory and Register By James Hardie, A.M. 1794 Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society

ving Truster for the breactors of James Dester and to whom the Es. tate of the sais James Deter both real and personal ties in true made over have received the Shands of Joseph years and Bronoko royal Have Onehundred Wounds a full Compensation for the said Gronoko and Merifore muther we our him En nor any of the bredston of the said James Gester do or can claim any Right in or to the said Cronako In Metrufs whereof we have Increments set our Hands and Seals the third Day of Augus 1707 Churtopher Marshall Jigned & deales in the presence of Cha Vionione Apheton Houmphreys Min Clive The thirs Day of August in the Year of our Lord 1707 Buy the peace for the bity obouty of Philade Came the med Christophu ellarshall, Charles Thomfon Inteles I acknowledge the above withen Instrument Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, Manumissions, Etc. Oronoko's Manumission, 1767 Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Know all men by these presents that we the subscribers surviving Trustees for the Creditors of James Dexter and to whom the Estate of the said James Dexter both real and personal was in trust made over have received thro the Hands of Joseph Yeates and of Oronoko royal Slave One hundred pounds a full compensation for the said Oronoko and therefore neither we our heirs Exr. nor any of the Creditors of the said James Dexter do or can claim any Right in or to the said Oronoko. In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our Hands and Seal this third Day of August AD. 1767

Signed and Sealed In the presence of Assheton Humphreys Wm Claire Christopher Marhall Cha Thompson Peter Wikoff



James Croneque Lefter a Black Freeman, when young and in Slavery was hered by his master to the Receper of Tavern in this buty, and being of an Obliging behaviour gained the good will of those who frequented the howe Do that presents he (Received from them in the shace of four year he had laved to the amount of lefty Pounds; his master dying in debt, he became the property of his breditors, who being de quainted with his good Character for lobily thousty, discid of freedom, agreed he should be kulterto possession of it on payment of One hundred counds within two years. which he engaged to do in the space of nene months, and with punctuality hordormedy after which being desorous of sattling on left, and inclining to marn he fixed on a young korman of reputation, and obtained the Convent of het possepor whom held her in so high estimation to rated the price of her redemption from lavery at so quak a rate that cronoque could not comply with the terms, and thenfore for some time declined further proceedings until at Length through The interposition, and enfluence of a friend he was prevailed upon to take fefty Sounds or her feedom, which was paid to her propertion by Oronogue

having by his industry gained thirty frounds of the mony, and the other part was lest by two his friends, whom he carifully repaid dictioning to marry write he had done it; after which he teated, and they lived together many year with recutation being fodustree and worthy bonfedence, and since the decease of his wife he has bonducted with sobriety, & Steadings; having known him has bonducted with sobriety, & Steadings; having known him more than ten years have had much opportunity of Observing man his behaviour, and proceedings, & do not know a labouring man whom Ishould prefers to employ or who is more to conflict in, his humanity in aposting and Ordering those of his own bolows winter difficalty is also conspectations as for as is in his powers which with his bonspectations principles render him a Truly worky Chandle with his bonspectations principles render him a Truly worky Chandle. Theeadelphica 16th. 8 man 1787

Society well acquainted with the above named James Oronoque Dester, I can feely testify my boncurrence with the Character given of him in the foregoing narrative, and as he has lively in the family of my brother I ohn Permberton sweet years at annual wages, frequent opportunities have occurred to my observation of his steady preduced bondered, delegened in business, & factiful attention to the fritunity of his master since, as before his late long absence from the fritunity of his master since, as before his late long absence from

Phicadeen 16:8 mg 1787

( am emberton)

Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, Manumissions, Etc.

Testimony in behalf of James Oronoque Dexter, 1787 Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

James Oronoque Dexter a Black Freeman, when young and in Slavery was hired by his master to the Keeper of a Tavern in this city, and being of an obliging behavior gained the good will of those who frequented the house so that by presents he Received from them in the space of four years he had saved to the amount of fifty Pounds: his master dying in debt, he became the property of his Creditors, who being acquainted with his good Character for sobriety & honesty, & his desire of freedom, agreed he should be put into possession of it on payment of one hundred Pounds within two years which he engaged to do in the space of nine months, and with punctuality performed. After which being desirous of settling in life, and inclining to marry he fixed on a young woman of reputation, and obtained the Consent of her possessor who held her in so high estimation that he rated the price of her redemption from Slavery as so great a rate that Oronoque could not comply with the terms, and therefore for some time declined further proceeding until at length through the interposition, and influence of a friend he was prevailed upon to take fifty Pounds for her freedom, which was paid to her possessor by Oronoque lent by two of his friends, whom he carefully repaid declining to marry until he had done it; after which he settled and they lived together many years with reputation being Industrious and worthy of Confidence, and Since the decease of his wife he has Conducted with Sobriety, & Steadiness; having known him more than ten years I have had much opportunity of observing his behaviour, and proceedings, & do not know a labouring man whom I should prefer to employ, or who is more to be confided in, his humanity in assisting and Relieving those of his own Colour and difficulty is also conspicuous as far as is in his powers which with his conscientious principles render him a Truly worthy Character

Philadelphia 16<sup>th</sup> 8 month 1787

Isaac Zane

Being well acquainted with the above named James Oronoque Dexter, I can freely testify my concurrence with the character given of him in the foregoing narrative, and as he has lived in the family of my brother John Pemberton several years at annual wages, frequent opportunities have occurred to my observation of his steady prudent conduct, diligence in business, & faithful attention to the Interest of his master Since, as before his late long absence from home.

Philadelp 16 8mno 1787

James Pemberton

while to whom these Rimans I William Janes of the lety of Philadelp Province of Sennsylvania Grazier send Guesting Use that for and in Consideration of the Jum of Pounds lawful Money of the Sais Province units in hand well and truly paid by Noake a divers other good bauses and bons released and discharged & by then mire free release and discharge my Me named Sufs aged about 25 years of Manner of Slavery Bondage Juvice of Slavery Duty of Serviliede hereafter to accuse or tobe done demanded by me my Heirs Executors or administra toes by any Law Usage or bustom Und all my Right Title Interest Property blaim and Demany of in and to the same rigio toman named for ever as fully freely and absolutely as Tones may might or could have held and in our hereworto set my hand and feal dated at Phila phia the twenty third day of the twelfth mon the year one thousand fever hundred and ealed and delivered In the presence of. Christopher Marshall

Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, Manumissions, Etc. Manumission for Priss, 1767 Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania To all People to whom these Presents shall come I William Jones of the City of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania, Grazier send Greeting. Know Ye that for and in Consideration of the Sum of sixty Pounds lawful Money of the said Province unto me in hand well and truly paid by Noake of the said City and for divers other good Causes and Considerations me specially moving I have manumised freed released and discharged &c by these Presents do manumise free release and discharge my Negro Woman names Priss aged about 25 Years of and from all Manner of Slavery Bondage Service of Slavery and Duty of Servitude hereafter is accrue or to be done or demanded by me my Heirs Executors or Administrators by any Law Usage or Custom And all my Estate Right Title Interest Properly Claim and Demand of in and to the same negro Woman named Priss for ever as fully freely and absolutely as I the said William Jones may might or could have held and enjoyed her by any means whatsoever In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal dated at Philadelphia the twenty third day of the twelfth Month in the Year one Thousand Seven hundred and Sixty seven.

Sealed and delivered In the presence of Christopher Marshal John Pemberton William Jones (L.S.)

# **Post-Visit Extension Activities**

The following extension activities may be utilized as follow-up to your visit to Independence National Historical Park, or for assessment purposes.

- 1. Create a brochure on Dexter for visitors to Independence National Historical Park. Be sure to include the contributions of archeology in learning about this man.
- 2. Write a letter to the editor about the importance of archeology and historic preservation. Make it specific to a site in your city if possible.
- 3. Research other kinds of archeology (besides urban archeology). Examples include industrial, underwater, experimental, and classical archeology. What are the similarities and differences to historical archeology in an urban setting?
- 4. Go back to the biography you wrote about James Dexter and learn about the events that happened during his lifetime like the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, Philadelphia becoming the nation's capital, the yellow fever epidemic, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, and the US Government moving to Washington, D.C.. Then rewrite your Dexter biography adding in the new information you learned about the time period.
- 5. Revisit the biography you wrote about James Dexter and fill in more details about what went on in his household using the information you learned that archeologists found out by excavating the site of his house. (Remember the lesson you completed during your field trip to Independence National Historical Park's Archeologist's in the Making Learning Lab.)
- 6. Use the information you have learned from both the pre-visit lessons and your visit to Independence National Historical Park to write a resume for James Dexter.
- 7. Look for examples of archeology in popular culture such as movies, books, and television. Then, using your understanding of what archeology is and what archeologists do, write a commentary describing if your example is an accurate portrayal of archeology.

# Vocabulary

**Anthropology**- The study of the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans. Anthropology studies humanity from the earliest times up to the present. Anthropology is broken into four subcategories: archeology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, and physical anthropology.

**Archeological "Context"-** Archeologists use the term "context" to describe the observable stratigraphic units, which include specific layers or deposits of soil, or features such as post molds. Archeologists dig according to the different contexts that they find within the site, starting with the excavation of the most recently deposited context and moving back in time or deeper in the ground. Artifacts are bagged, analyzed and eventually stored according to context. Artifacts within each context can be used to date the context and help to determine the date or timeline of the history of the entire site.

**Archeologist**- Someone who uses scientific methods to study the material remains of past human life and activities. As scholars and scientists, archeologists do not collect artifacts for profit or personal use.

**Archeology** (also spelled archaeology in the U.S.) - The scientific study of how people lived in the past through analysis of material remains uncovered during scientific excavations or digs.

**Artifact**- Anything made and /or used by humans, including tools, containers, and food remains. Buildings are also artifacts, but archeologists usually apply the term "artifact" only to portable items.

**Excavation**- An archeological dig.

**Feature**- A non-portable artifact that cannot be moved without destroying it. Examples of features include wells, privy pits, walls, and fence posts.

**Historical Archeology-** The study of archeological sites from the modern period in conjunction with historical records and other kinds of information.

**Material Culture**- A term given to objects that people use on a daily basis that reveal facts about their lives.

**Post Mold**- A type of feature; a circular stain left in the ground after a wooden post has decayed. It usually indicates the former existence of a house or fence.

**Primary Source**- Made by people who actually saw and wrote about a historical place or activity at the time when that activity happened.

**Provenience**- A specific location where an artifact or feature is found in the ground.

**Secondary Source**- Made by people who learned about the place of events from someone else or by looking at primary sources.

**Stratigraphy**- Used as a relative dating technique to assess the sequence of artifact position .

**Urban Archeology**- Urban archeology usually occurs when land is being cleared for new buildings or older buildings are being torn down. Archeologists are called to excavate the sites in order to collect and preserve the artifacts. This type of archeology is many times considered a rescue excavation because of the time pressure of the builders and construction crews.

# **Resources for Teachers and Students**

#### Websites

## http://www.nps.gov/archeology/sites/npSites/franklincourt.htm

Learn about archeology at Franklin Court. This website has information on the basics of archeology all related to Benjamin Franklin and life at Franklin Court.

## http://www.sha.org/

The Society for Historical Archeology's website has a special section for kids to learn about careers in Archeology.

## http://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/index.htm

Here you will find activities, resources, and much more for encouraging a child's interest in archeology as well as encouraging stewardship for archeological heritage.

## **Books**

Archaeology for Young Explorers: Uncovering History at Colonial Williamsburg by Patricia Samford and David L. Ribblett. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (1999).

Archeology for Kids: Uncovering the Mysteries of Our Past by Richard Panchyk. Chicago Review Press (2001).

Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence: The Story of New York's African Burial Ground by Joyce Hansen and Gary McGowan. Henry Hold & Company (1998).

*The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia* by John L. Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts, and Michael Parrington. University of Pennsylvania Press (1992).

*The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* edited by Elaine Foreman Crane. Northwest University Press (1991).